

MARCH 1990

\$2.50

#120

H-SCOOP

The double density newsletter for Heath/Zenith computer support

ZDS TURNS BACK ON QUIKDATA!

The New Medallion Program



ZENITH HACKS DEALER BASE

NO MORE ZENITH MAIL ORDER

TOUGH LUCK QUIKDATA!

In another one of Zenith's brilliant and top heavy corporate moves, hundreds of former Zenith Data Systems dealers did not get their contracts renewed. Zenith made a decision to hack their dealer base and establish criteria for their new "Medallion" dealers. The major force behind the move was to get more Zenith computer sales; to go after the big bucks from computer sales to businesses and corporate accounts. And in no uncertain terms, Zenith made it clear they want absolutely nothing to do with mail order folks anymore. Only face to face sales would be allowed after February 24th. Well, since I have nothing to lose, perhaps it's time to blow off some steam and talk about the **real** Zenith.

At the beginning, Zenith was not crazy about mail order. They thought twice about allowing Quikdata handle their products. We convinced them since we were already involved with the Heath support before Zenith ever came along, we could do a good job in this field. We could reach people that nobody else could. We already had a large established customer base. And since we were supporting their products anyway, it was a natural extension to also sell the computers and related Zenith items. Besides other large mail order firms who knew absolutely nothing about Zenith computers and support were selling them. They agreed, as long as we'd keep a low profile and not advertise that we were selling their computers with our prices posted. We abided by all of that. Our sales were always strong with no complaints, and because most of our sales came from word of mouth referrals (the best advertising one can get) we did just fine without spending lots of advertising bucks. Thus we could sell the product for less, making it more attractive with today's competitive marketplace (Zenith computers at list price have always been the highest around).

We later complained that the other mail order companies who knew nothing about the Zenith computers were posting their prices and coming in below ours. We got the OK to start publishing prices. This was just in the past year.

When the medallion program came along, we were first told they wanted to go after big business and we had to have an outside sales force. Well in Sheboygan, most computer stores have shut down. The business just is not there. We're not exactly Los Angeles or Chicago with a wide marketplace. Then at the last minute (about a week ago) we were told they wanted nothing to do anymore with mail order, all sales were face to face. Thus even if we hired an outside sales force, abandoning our mail order would promptly put us in chapter 11.

When my sales rep mentioned the medallion program and the terms, I told him if it was a one sided deal (the dealer does this and this and this, but what does Zenith do) we would not even be interested. Problem with Zenith employees is they are afraid to talk to higher-ups in fear of rocking the boat, which could eventually cost them their jobs.

Under the terms of the new contract, one of the resellers obligations is: "Reseller agrees that its sales activity will involve face-to-face pre- and post-sale support for end-user customers in its Target Market; that it will not engage in mail order, telephone order or similar sales activities, or sales to customers other than end users within Reseller's Target Market..." Notice how the agreement works both ways: "ZDS shall not be liable to Reseller for any failure in filling orders accepted by ZDS..." Hmm, sounds fair to me!

But like many other vendors who feel mail order under all circumstances, and with no exceptions, is bad business, Zenith

jumped on the same sinking ship. Seems to me, that's exactly what many others did, and most have had their sales suffer as a result.

I called several ZDS dealers and past dealers about this subject. What I gathered mainly was the medallion program is based more on geographical location than anything else. Quikdata happens to be located between two larger Zenith places, Milwaukee houses a Heath/Zenith store who's main computer sales are non-Zenith, and there is another in Madison. I have heard nothing good especially about the Milwaukee store. In fact, I have plenty of customers from both of those places who would have abandoned Zenith long ago had it not been for Quikdata.

I'll also interject that it has not been all fun handling Zenith. When advertised computers are "out of stock" for six months, the dealer takes the heat, not Zenith. When items such as tech manuals are back ordered for six months, it's the dealer that takes the heat, not Zenith. When a computer breaks down and Zenith does not have the boards or parts available to fix it ASAP and get them back up, it's the dealer that takes the heat and not Zenith. When our customers want to know why his neighbor via government or education discounts can buy a Zenith computer for far less than dealers purchase them for, we again take the heat. I could go on and on about dealer/ customer/ Zenith relations. But it's not only the customer who suffers and the dealer getting caught in the middle. I estimate we spend thousands of dollars a year straightening up Zenith's bookwork by doing their accounting for them. Our secretary has been primarily a bookkeeper in her past, and she said she has never experienced anything like it (in fact, as I'm writing this, she's on the phone for half an hour already arguing with our credits due from Zenith). But that story's too long to print here. Then there's the story about the one sales rep of ours who has the entire state of Wisconsin to cover, and no inside sales rep to take his place when he's on the road. The majority of the time he is on the road or in meetings (Zenith is notorious for meetings, but their employees are like scared rabbits in a cage afraid to say anything to anyone lest they lose their jobs) and we can't even reach him. Although he has usually been prompt (within a day or two) of returning messages left, it's not the same as having somebody on your side on the inside. No, it has not been all fun and games, but since that has been my life for the past 13 years, we continued to do all we could to support both Zenith and our customers.

Quikdata is one of the only dealerships that I knew of that not only carried the entire line of Zenith's, but carried Zenith as their only computer line. I would have thought that would have been worth something. My sales rep told me Zenith was trying to keep their full line dealers, since many only will sell monitors or laptops for instance, and ignore the remainder of the product line. Other dealers sell many different brands of computers. I never felt one could do justice to any brand when handling several. We stayed only with Zenith.

It seems to me, since there is not a Zenith or Heath store on every block, Zenith computers and other products will not be accessible to very many people anymore. Lots of Zenith stuff has been sold by mail for many reasons:

First off, retail price of Zenith products are way too high. Nobody's going to pay list price for Zenith computers, or anywhere near list price. There are too many good computers out there that are as good as Zenith's (and do much higher in the PC type magazine reports) but much lower in price.

Second, many folks that deal with Quikdata, and I'm sure the same is true for some other mail order places, have told us they shop Quikdata because they have been burnt by their local (local may mean within 200 miles or so) Zenith and/or Heath stores. I've been told by all too many, that they won't even set foot in their local place. I've also been told if it weren't for us and mail order people like us, they simply would not buy Zenith. I understand

many Zenith and Heath stores have really rotten reputations. We do lots of business with Milwaukee area folks because they hate their local Heath store. I know, I've had experience with them myself.

Third, most Heath/Zenith face-to-face stores have no idea what an H8, H89, H/Z100 is. Of course that can't fix them and no way in the world would they have parts to fix them even if they could. In fact many Zenith dealers know a little about only the most recent products and that's it.

Unfortunately, Quikdata, who has been supporting Heath and Zenith for the past thirteen years, and is also a mail order company, will no longer be able to sell Zenith computer products. Being a Zenith service center, we will still be allowed to order and sell parts, but once our stock of Zenith inventory depletes, that will be it for Zenith's main line. We presently have quite a bit of stock, so if anybody wants Zenith yet from us, get it before it runs out.

The word's been out on several bulletin boards and many of our customers are concerned that we are going to quit the H/Z support. I want to make one thing perfectly clear. We do not intend to stop H/Z support. We have been doing that the past 13 years, and it's what I am best at, and what I enjoy. I know I have a strong loyal support group out there who wants me to continue. We did fine before Zenith ever came along, and we'll do fine without them. We will simply pick a top grade brand computer to be able to supply to our customers with after our Zenith stock is exhausted.

We have anticipated this move and have been holding off preparing a new catalog until we were certain. Now we can begin the catalog project leaving out Zenith. Many questions remain, including the extent to which we want to be involved with Zenith in the future. My feeling at this time is if that's the way Zenith feels about us, why should we even bother to help them out. If the big bucks is all Zenith is interested in, and our past support and help means nothing to them, why should we help them? Our customers and the Heath/Zenith line of the past we will continue to support.

I have had a vision for a long time, and perhaps now I will try to implement it. I picture a bulletin board with a section for all the H/Z computer lines. It will contain all known problems, solutions, hints, compatibilities, etc. It will be a very expensive and time consuming project, but it will be the ultimate board of all H/Z support. To get to this section of the board will be on a subscriber basis. Give me your comments.

I personally handle hundreds of phone calls per week, which is one reason things such as our bulletin board are not progressing as planned. There simply are not enough hours in the day. Unfortunately, too many of those calls deal with folks who have purchased their computers elsewhere. When their dealer cannot and/or will not support their customers properly, they usually turn to us. In the past we have helped them all out. In the future we will continue to sell memory upgrades, accessories, hard drives, floppy drives, etc., for the new computers. However, if you have a problem, take it to your hi-tech knowledgeable medallion dealer. He's making the money off the system, let him handle all the associated headaches as well.

I do not anticipate those corporate brains to change their minds, and at this point it probably wouldn't make a difference. However, you may just want to write John Frank, President of ZDS and let him know how you feel and how Quikdata has supported you over the years. I'd appreciate copies of all correspondence for my files. I will collect them all and send them to all the big shots, including the France based BULL. And who knows, I may be job hunting some day and this stuff will look good in my folder!

John Frank
1000 Milwaukee Avenue/ Glenview, IL 60025

I have gathered some feedback from various boards on this subject. I am very pleased and proud of the loyal supporters I have. Read on.

Fm: J. W. Rider 72426,1640
To: Henry Fale [Quikdata] 70115,120

That could indeed be a problem. Not only for you, but for Zenith also. I can't really think a single, successful corporate move into the no-mail-order market -- and Apple's disastrous attempt comes to mind immediately. If the Apple attempt is any indication, what we can expect to see is that people will indeed spend their money on economical alternatives to Zenith products. This could inspire a whole industry of non-Zenith replacements for Zenith computers. (I doubt seriously if we'd see a rush of Zenith "clones" like occurred with Apple.) I can even imagine people deciding to buy non-Zenith products because of the unavailability of affordable, third-party support in the Zenith arena. Here's hoping that you'll be able to transition smoothly to other product markets.

Fm: Charles Seth 70200,154
To: Henry Fale [Quikdata] 70115,120

Hi Henry,
I am very sad to see your message. But, since you are a dealer that provides full support and service, I think that you will find that the customers will still be there- whether you sell Zenith or brand x clone. I was hoping that the sale of Zenith to Groupe Bull would change the attitude, but apparently the TV sales people are still in charge. If you can, please continue H-Scoop. If you haven't noticed, there was a previous thread about you on the same subject. Good luck, and please let us know what you decide to do.

Charley

Sb: Zenith dumping Quikdata?

Fm: Mike Bauer 72310,443
To: B. Donald Nevin 71001,1225 (X)

I noted your mention of "Medallion Dealers." In his last issue of H-Scoop, Henry Fale said that Zenith was going to terminate his dealership because he dared to sell mail-order. This, in spite of the fact that he has been selling Heath/Zenith stuff forever and he delivers better service than any of the "full-service" dealers that I've run into so far. Besides, how much retail business can you do in Sheboygan, WI???

I'd like to join your revolution. How do I sign up?
Maybe Zenith should have a talk with Dell to see if mail-order vendors can deliver good service. Seems like Dell beats the pants off Zenith in every survey I've seen, in spite of being 100% mail order. Who comes up with this stuff, anyway?

Fm: B. Donald Nevin 71001,1225
To: Mike Bauer 72310,443 (X)
Mike,

As a retired Zenith Dealer that stocked the Z-89's I sold the business not for the fact that Zenith had a bad product. I was a small shop sold just over 10k computers in 10 years. My paid staff would spend 78-91% of their time supporting Zenith products that we did not get a mark up on. The machines were purchased from a Zenith educational, military or major corp. account. I love the Zenith product! One of the first things that I do when I sit down to a machine is to press ALT-Ctrl-Enter if it does not do anything I will double my fee. The Z's are really a lot easier to work with.

ZENITH DO NOT DROP HENRY FALE [QUIKDATA] AS A DEALER. WE KNOW AND LOVE THE ZENITH PRODUCT LINE you have to be paid for it but we have supported with out pay your clients / our friends for many years.

>>ZENITH<< If you do not make QUIKDATA a dealer because he can not push the boxes and you are not allowing mail order. Henry has given better service over the phone and faster service (UPS) than Zenith it's self.

I'm pissed. Ok for me to sell my shop. I was feed up and wanted to get out. Henry supports better than Zenith and wants to stay. More to the point. Quikdata will and always has repaired ZDS

gear faster than ZDS. I can not go on with this without using bad words.

From Bruce.

Love: Zenith Products!

Programmer types

ZDS monitor ROMS and operating systems.

Quikdata support hardware, software, repair and add ons!

Hate: RMAs

Zenith selling computers cheaper to any student than to an authorized dealer and repair center that has been there for all for 10 years.

<([AAAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHH])>

Fm: Tom Looker 76477,22

To: Henry Fale [Quikdata] 70115,120 (X)

Henry:

Your news is extremely disheartening; it's the sort of story which makes me want to throw all my Zenith equipment away--why support a company whose executives are so bureaucratic and bloody-minded? (A friend of mine is a Zenith dealer around where I live...and I've heard tales for years about how Zenith has been treating its own people.)

As soon as I find out to whom I should write a letter, I shall fire off at least one irate note about what Zenith is doing to you. (If you have any suggestions, let me know.) Good luck in your future affiliations. You have been a loyal friend of your customers and (though they hardly know it) of Zenith.

-- Tom Looker

Sb: #3058-#Quikdata

Fm: Mike Bauer 72310,443

To: Henry Fale [Quikdata] 70115,120

Henry: It is very interesting that Zenith has terminated you for daring to sell by mail-order, yet Zenith happily accepted your money for years while you ran mail-order ads in REMARK, the Zenith user magazine. It is unusual to see such blatant hypocrisy, even today. Please let us know what new brand you decide to pick up, so we can switch over. It is clear that Zenith neither wants nor deserves our future business.

P.S. I left an announcement of your impending termination on the HUG BBS in St. Joseph, along with a few editorial comments. Care to make any guesses on how long the message will stay posted?

Sb: #3058-Quikdata

Fm: B. Donald Nevin 71001,1225

To: Henry Fale [Quikdata] 70115,120

Henry,

I talked with two Zenith people who were up here. They told me that the only dealers in Wisconsin will be in Milwaukee and Madison. One was my former Retail salesman the other a really good service/support person who was moved to Educational accounts. I have been (as you may have noticed) attempting to gather a mass of Heath/Zenith users to call the corporation. Good luck. BRUCE

Fm: mike bauer

To: All

Sb: ZDS Trashes Quikdata!!!

Henry Fale of Quikdata just announced that Zenith has terminated Quikdata's Zenith dealership.

Quikdata has been a Zenith dealer for over 13 years and has been a loyal advertiser in REMARK. My experience has been that Quikdata has provided superior service and support to its customers. Zenith terminated Henry's contract because he dared to sell mail-order.

I find it incomprehensible that Zenith management would be idiotic enough to arbitrarily trash one of their best dealers. Henry's crime was to sell by mail order, yet his mail-order advertisements were happily accepted by REMARK, the Heath/Zenith magazine.

I have been a loyal customer of Zenith's and of Quikdata for some time now. Given a choice between the two, I will probably support Quikdata in the future and purchase whatever new brand he decides to take on.

Fm: mike bauer

To: All

Sb: Quikdata, continued

I have always thought the Zenith's hardware is among the best in the industry. That is why I have purchased Zenith machines. It is truly sad to see a superior engineering group brought down by a truly bone-headed management.

Fm: Dennis Gambler

To: mike bauer

Sb: Quikdata, continued

MIKE! I AGREE!!! WHAT YA SAY WE GET A POLL GOING ON THIS BBS TO HAVE ZDS RECONSIDER??? JIM B. (SYSOP) COULD RELAY THE RESULTS!!!!

Fm: george thompson

To: Dennis Gambler

Sb: Quikdata, continued

This is definitely a rotten deal to give to Henry, a person who has supported Heath/Zenith products since I can remember. I definitely believe that the Chairman of the Board of Zenith Data Systems should be contacted by our user group as well as by the BUS-Americas (Bull User Society - Americas) for relief from this atrocious misdirection.

George Thompson, UNIX Technical Director, BUS-Americas

From: RONALD PANNATONI

To: SYSOP (Rcvd)

Subj: A LETTER

Henry:

This evening I called one of your other customers, Bruce Bennett, to talk with him about his experience with the 386si board. In the course of our discussion I mentioned that Zenith had revoked your dealership. He was unaware of this and thought it might be appropriate to write to Zenith protesting their action.

I would certainly write such a letter, too. I'm sure that many of your customers, even those who don't read H-SOOP, would do the same.

Since you undoubtedly know who's in charge at Zenith, can you suggest where to address such a letter?

Ron Pannatoni

From: DON DECK

To: HENRY FALE (Rcvd)

Subj: REPLY TO MSG# 1073 (DASHER)

Glad to be able to support you. Sorry about the Zenith Dealer mess. You have garnered some STRONG SUPPORT by several people on the HUB BBS. They may start a campaign with Zenith to change their mind. You have a lot of loyal friends.

At one time Heath was looking for Heathkit dealers. Don't know if it is still an option. Might be a way for you to keep involved with Heath and maybe the kit computers if you were interested and if they didn't have restrictions you didn't like.

From: BRIAN HANSEN

To: SYSOP (Rcvd)

Subj: ZDS DROPPED THE BALL

Sorry to read of the dropping of Quikdata from the ZDS sales force. I will try to get a letter off to the address you provided to us. It seems to me they like to shoot themselves in not only their foot but all the way up to their BACKSIDE!!!!!! At this time one would think that they would be trying to increase sales anyway they could by supporting the dealer network. You have been a long time supporter of ZDS and now they stick it to you. Since you have been dropped from the ZDS Dealer Network do you think my TM380 will ever be received by you? I will probably wait a month or two just in case you do get it before I try somewhere

else (NOT that I really want to give anyone else the business). Of course I probably will never purchase anything else with the ZDS Logo ever again. I have a hard enough time looking for dealer support without loosing you due to ZDSs VERY STUPID MOVE. Good luck in the future. Brian

From: BRIAN HANSEN

To: HENRY FALE

Subj: REPLY TO MSG# 1103 (ZDS DROPPED THE BALL)

OK. I will tune in from time to time and look for further information on this subject. Along with more details on the whole MESS. I do hope that you can at least get the backorderd items promised to waiting customers. I feel that ZDS really shot themselves in the BACKSIDE this time. I don't think that it will bring happiness to your waiting customers if you have to cancel them because ZDS is stupid!! Would not do ZDS public relations much good to explain to your customers why they caused you not to be able to deliver a ZDS product. I would blame them completely and then try to find another brand of computer to buy. I can't see supporting a company that doesn't want my business by stopping sales through a good former ZDS sales company. OH well enough said. I will try to write ZDS over the weekend since I want to calm down a bit. Rational letters are better receive since nasty ones usually get called 'CRANK'. Good luck on your future business ventures. Maybe you can still sell add ons and I know the 8 bit H/Z8-89 users still appreciate the support since H/Z/BULL don't seem to care. Brian

MONTGOMERY WARD TO SELL MINISPOT

Zenith Data Systems announced that their MinisPort notebook computer will be available through Montgomery Ward's larger "Electric Avenue" home electronics department. Robert Poznanovich, ZDS VP of Sales said "We're delighted that Montgomery Ward will participate in our new distribution strategy. This strategy includes offering select products through a few, key national merchandisers to reach the home-office market and providing our full line of products through about 500 'medallion' computer resellers who will focus on the business market". [Hmmm, the business market? That's going to leave lot of folks out. Anyway their chain store sales of their product has been a failure in the past, another try?]

SEARS TO SELL PORTABLE PCs

Zenith Data Systems also announced that their most popular portable computer, the SupersPort 286 model 20 laptop computer will soon be available through Sears network of "Brand Central" home electronics departments.

ZDS VP of Sales, Robert Poznanovich said "Our agreement with Sears is the beginning of the second part of our new distribution strategy, which we recently announced. We want to work with a few, key national merchandisers who can reach the growing home-office market with our mainstream products, and we're delighted that Sears has become the first to join us in this effort.

"To reach businesses looking for our high-end products, we've already started to recruit about 500 full-line computer resellers, who will be our 'medallion' dealers"

Z386-SX GETS BAD RATINGS

If you are looking for a 386 SX machine and you are a die-hard loyal Zenith fan, you better do your homework. In the January 15th issue of InfoWorld in the Product Comparison section titled **Penny-Pinching Power**, 18 386 SX systems were compared and rated. The Zenith system was the highest priced and received the lowest rating of 5.0 out of 10 for the \$6,936 system. Even the lowest priced \$2,450 Polywell system received a 6.6. They say "The only poor value we evaluated was Zenith, which was very slow in CPU performance and slower than most in disk-intensive work. The slow CPU times may be due to a mode-switching

problem, which the company said it has fixed, although we were not able to test the new system. It also earned poor marks in documentation, support policies, and technical support."

The winner was the Everex system "which has a history in our tests of top performance at a competitive price..."

INTEL WANTS TO KILL 286

It won't be long now before the PC/XT is extinct, with perhaps the next model up being a 386 SX machine. At least if Intel has anything to say about it. There have been billboards spotted with simply the number "286" with a large red "X" over it. In small letters on the bottom of the sign is the word Intel.

So what gives? With the 286 prices dropping dramatically, PC/XT's are phasing out. In fact, Zenith is even discontinuing their last PC/XT desktop computer, the Z159. The basic Z248 sells for less than the Z159 once did. But then I can remember the \$3,000 Z89. Seems that Intel is pushing the 80386 family, especially the SX. The SX systems do not cost a whole lot more than the 286 systems, and have more power and speed.

There's more to it than that, however. Seems that Intel has licensed its processors to other companies - all except the 80386 family which they have sole control over. If you ever look at your 80286 CPU board, and look at the 80286 chip, chances you will see the Intel copyright. Chances also are that you will see another name on the chip! My CPU has Fujitsu.

Intel refuses to license the 80386 family to anybody, thus they have a total monopoly on this product family. Industry analysts are very worried. If something goes wrong at Intel or they experience production problems for any reason whatsoever, the 386 computer lines will all come to a grinding halt since no processor chips will be available. Very dangerous indeed. But as long as all goes well, Intel reaps all the profits for the 386 machines. So obviously they'd rather you forget the 80286 ever existed and jump right to the 386!

MISCELLANEOUS BITS

* **Lee Hart of TMSI has moved.** His address is: 323 W 19th St/ Holland, MI 49423. He has not moved his business stuff and will be doing that over the next several weeks. Thus he'll be spread quite thin for awhile. Expect delays in product and support until he can get settled and organized. Phone (616) 396-5085.

* Seems more and more folks are turning to a supposedly **superior database product, Foxpro vs Dbase IV**. Too many bugs in dBASE, too many broken promises, too many delays. Ashton-Tate has been laying off employees, while trying to revamp the tech support department. I've been told that the paying support customers (\$150/year) get a toll free number to call which is answered right away. Others have to use the pay number and wait in line. However, support conditions are said to be much better there now. Their stock still is not doing too good.

There's been talk about **getting rid of Esber**, but many want to give him the chance to try to straighten out his mess. Meanwhile they continue to pursue their copyright infringement suit against who else? Fox Software, makers of Foxpro, their major competitor. Very interesting, as Fox is a relatively small company and are doing very well for themselves. When Ashton-Tate was small, they did quite well too. I certainly hope Ashton-Tate does not win this one. They have already lost much credibility because of this suit, and that's something they don't need right now. However, since Esber has a real bug up his rear on this one, he'd rather pursue this to the bitter end rather than to admit he may have been wrong. Well Ed, may the best man win!

* **Intel is not the only maker of math coprocessors?** Cyrix claims to have a coprocessor, the **FasMath**, that is much faster

than the Intel 80387. Problem is, it costs more with the 20Mhz model going at \$745. Ever wonder why processor chips dropped in price so much but coprocessors never have? Me too. I suspect there's some politics involved here.

Anyway, the pin-compatible coprocessor promises a tenfold increase in performance over the standard Intel part. The chip implements all the Intel functions, but they are performed to 91-bit internal accuracy. It uses less power and dissipates less heat. The secret in the speed increase is while Intel performs floating-point operations by software code, the FasMath chip has the same operations coded into the hardware.

Is it really that fast? No. It may process information ten times faster, but the interface between that and the processor was not designed to transfer the data that fast. Not only that, but most coprocessor software is not written properly. What it all boils down to is not enough to justify the much higher chip cost.

* Now that the **Z515 4Mb RAM card for the Z386/16 has been discontinued** in another of Zenith's brilliant moves, what memory card can be used in that machine? The only one I can think of, if it's ever released, is the RamTop 386 that has been announced for the past 6 months or so by First Capitol Computer. Thus far it's been vaporware. However, I called FCC and they said it should be available for \$995 in early March. We'll have to keep our eye on that, as I was told "in four weeks" three months ago. It is used with the Z505 1MB card.

* Questions have been coming in about the hard drives used in the Zenith laptop computers. I did some checking and was informed that **all hard drives used in Zenith laptops are auto-park drives**. Thus when you turn off the computer the heads are automatically parked, so you don't have to worry about running a SHIP or PARK utility to park the heads. In addition, I was told that all the hard drives used in any Zenith computers (not counting the smaller hard drives in the older computers) are auto-park drives.

* A customer called to tell me he tried to obtain a **ROM upgrade for his Z386/16 computer and told the cost would be \$311!** That seems to be because beside the ROM upgrade, there are changes needed to the CPU board also. One would think if there was some problem with the CPU board, it should be a free fix.

* I've been seeing more and **more Zenith advertisements on television** of late. However they are not computer advertisements but Zenith TV advertisements. I guess now that Zenith is out of computers and they have some money they can afford to advertise again.

* Quikdata has been battling the **Z248/12 for the past few months to try to find a way to get an LPT3: working**. I guess nobody every tried that or thought of it - not even Zenith when they designed the machine. We finally got an LPT2: working, but even that gave us problems with most parallel boards we tried, including Zenith's own board! The BOCA AT I/O board is the one that seems to work as LPT2:. We have tried the Zucker board which can be addressed to LPT3:, but thus far with no luck. We have people all over at several Zenith places working on this and so far nobody has come up with any definite answers yet.

* National Semiconductor Corporation recently acquired most of **Quadram**, including the Quadram name and trademarks.

PRODUCT BRIEFS

Based on customer recommendation, we have decided to start a new column. This column will, as the name implies, give you a brief description and/or review of some of the more popular hardware and software products that work, and work well, on H/Z computers.

We used to have quite a large "NEW STUFF" column in the old days before Zenith and more so, the computer world, became merged together through the PC standard. Years back, vendors, customers and H/Z users really stuck together - they had to. Now since anybody can go anyplace and buy anything for their PC computers, the bond has broken.

Quikdata has, and always will, strive to bring you the best. I say that especially in light of the new Zenith dealer policy to ax the mail order businesses. We only carry products in our catalog that we can depend on, that work, that are compatible with H/Z computers, that we can support, and that we can usually ship out within 24 hours. Companies that have copy protected software, or do not offer good technical support have always been ignored by Quikdata.

Customers have complained because they suddenly "find out" about the marvelous items that we have in our catalog. They haven't ordered them, because they were not really aware of what they did. A short catalog description cannot convey that meaning.

Thus, I decided to use this column to describe some very unique hardware and software. Products that actually work with Heath/Zenith computers. Whether Quikdata carries these products or not, will have no bearing on this column's content. However, usually if we see a good thing, we jump on it, investigate it, check for compatibility, and then, and only then, if all the criteria is satisfied, we will carry the product.

You will only find favorable products reviewed here. Items that have been tried and tested in H/Z computers.

Since this is a new column, I would welcome your comments, suggestions, criticisms, etc. I would also appreciate your input on items you have been very pleased with that have worked with your H/Z computers, and yes, that includes you 8-bitters (hey, I still have a working H8 and H89 working that get used enough to keep me in tune with the computers, HDOS and CP/M!). Remember, we have to start to ban together, and not only leave it up to a handful, or the H/Z support will eventually totally vanish.

OPTUNE

The All-In-One Hard Disk Survival Repair and Tune-up Maintenance Utility

I have talked to too many computer users who have hard drives, and very few of them use a disk unfragment program. This is a shame as not only does that make the computer slow down for disk I/O, but it also puts more wear and tear on the drive, shortening its life. When a contiguous file is read, the heads move a minimal amount to read or write back the file. When the file is fragmented, the heads are jumping all over the place. Most users are concerned about speed more than the wear of the drive, but for either reason, keeping your hard drive unfragmented is important. A final point is a unfragmented file that has been accidentally erased can be recovered quite easily since it's all in one contiguous path. A fragmented file that has been accidentally erased can be very difficult to recover.

Problem is, with a program like MACE, the one who started this unfragment business, it can take hours to unfragment a hard disk. Enter **OPTUNE**. It can sort the files, pack and unfragment them in a matter of minutes (the first run takes the longest - after that daily runs may take a minute or so each). Thus ends the excuse of not keeping your drive unfragmented. Not only like, but unlike Mace or others, it displays a colorful screen showing your areas of locked out sectors, free space, and files, both fragmented and unfragmented. As it does it's work, it displays the fragmented files it works on so you can see which files are fragmented. Very nifty and fast. But it goes beyond fragmenting. If you choose the pack option, all free spaces are filled and the

space ends up at the end of the hard disk. Directories are also packed. This all adds to faster directory operations and allows programs to load faster, again reducing wear and tear on the drive. I very highly recommend this package for this feature alone.

Optimization can also be done specifying file realignment where the files are actually arranged in the same order as the directory entries. It can increase efficiency when many files are accessed in a sequential order.

But that's not all. It also works like SpinRite II, having an option to give the drive a new low level prep, nondestructively. Like SpinRite, it also checks for the best interleave and sets it accordingly if you want it to.

OPTune also checks the DOS file and directory structure before each optimization and can fix problems that surface. It can also search for and repair problem spots even if currently being used by files. We had a customer here with a bad spot on his hard drive with a 2 meg file as part of it, and it recovered the file and marked the spot as bad.

There is also a Verify/Fix-Disk option which does several things. It will find marginal areas on the disk and prevent DOS from using them. It can also get data from damaged files and move it to a safe location, then block out the bad areas. It also, like the Tune-Disk option, strengthens magnetic signals on the disk. The Crash Prevention option can predict and prevent hard disk failures before they occur. There is even a Bit-Test option with three levels. This test uses different bit patterns that reverse the magnetic polarity of each bit on the disk and test it. Level two performs 8 unique bit patterns similar to what hard drive manufacturers use to detect errors on the drives. It then uses proprietary bit tests. Level three performs the first test and then 16 unique bit patterns used by hard drive manufacturers to detect errors, and then 8 other proprietary patterns. It can take many hours, but is a thorough test and lock out procedure.

Reports can be sent to printer and/or disk.

With all these features, you'd think the program would be hard to use and expensive. It's neither. Easy to use, auto install, not copy protected, and not expensive. The price of this package is less than Mace, and less than SpinRite, and it's much faster than both. And customer support is a toll free number.

Quikdata is now stocking both the 3.5" and the 5" versions for \$89. If you mention this review, we will sell it for \$75 during the month of March.

DOC'S FEEDBACK

DOS 3.3+ / WORDPERFECT 5.1 / EMM.SYS

The following was sent in by Doc Campbell: WHY EVERYONE SHOULD SUBSCRIBE TO H-SCOOP AND WHY HENRY FALE AND DON M. DECK ARE TWO OF THE GREATEST AND WHY YOU CAN PURCHASE A SLIGHTLY USED DESKJET + FROM HENRY - Read On:

I thought I was losing my sanity and my computer and/or my printer were breaking down. As many of you folks know I am a great booster of Word Perfect, one of the world's finest (if not THE finest) word processors! And, I have also used Hewlett Packard's DeskJet printers and found them to be the closest thing to LaserJets but they were less expensive. I liked the combination so well that I wrote 2 short articles about using Word Perfect 5.0 and the DeskJet printers together!

Word Perfect recently introduced a new version of Word Perfect (version 5.1), and Hewlett Packard recently brought forth a more affordable TRUE Laserjet (HP LaserJet II P). So, almost simultaneously I decided to upgrade from WP 5.0 to 5.1, and sell

my DeskJet + (only 6 months old). I proceeded to order both! 5.1 arrived first.

Problems! For the next 8 weeks I struggled with a horrendous problem. My DeskJet + printed text and graphics flawlessly when I used it with my H-386 computer and WP 5.0, but I could **not** print graphics with the new WP 5.1. Text printed perfectly (unless it contained some graphics, in which case everything locked up when I attempted to print the material!) Dozens of phone calls were made to Word Perfect's knowledgeable and patient corps of technical consultants. They could **NOT** reproduce my problem (they possess every printer for which the innumerable printer "drivers" which they supply with Word Perfect - at least 9 diskettes full of drivers - well over 100 drivers I am sure). Further, no one could solve my problem. Also, NO ONE ELSE SEEMED TO HAVE THIS PROBLEM! What obscure bug lurked somewhere in my hardware or software? HP could not help either. Obviously, I could not in good conscience sell my DeskJet + printer with this cloud hanging over my setup. This meant I couldn't afford the new LaserJet printer I had ordered which fortunately was back-ordered! What to do? Text fine, but **NO** graphics! That was the symptom! But what was the cause? All my other software (Quickbasic, Fastback Plus, Quattro, Lotus 123, dBASE IV, etc.) continued to work flawlessly! I questioned regional Zenith Data System's technical consultants. They couldn't help me.

H-SCOOP, Henry Fale, and Don M. Deck to the rescue - my February 1990 issue # 119 of H-SCOOP arrived and (as always) I read it cover to cover. What is this, I read? A section on Zenith's MSDOS 3.3+ problem help, submitted by Don Deck? I have been using that version of MSDOS without problems for about 2 years. I read further. EMM.SYS, "Some people had reported problems with the new version 5.1 of WP if they were using expanded memory with Zenith memory boards". Don had not been using EMM.SYS and had not tested the NEW Zenith driver available at a Benton Harbor bulletin board phone number. I had never heard of this bulletin board, and if I had ever heard of this number which is said to be Heath/Zenith's Software Consultation, I must have forgotten it long ago. I don't recall ever reading about it in REMARK! I knew that Zenith had closed down all their software consultation services some years ago, but this bulletin board? Flaws in 8 files? And, serious ones at that? And no help available to the poor user except at an obscure phone number which answered with a peculiar whine, suggesting that only callers using a modem (which I don't possess) could access this phone number?

To make a long story short, a very good friend of mine downloaded the files and sent me a diskette with the new files on it - 8 in total! Although Don only mentioned 6 files, PREP and PART also apparently had bugs in them. Since I had expanded memory in my computer, I replaced the EMM.SYS driver in my root directory with the new EMM.SYS driver mentioned by Don in his article and I could now print graphics. My PROBLEM WAS SOLVED! Now graphics printed perfectly. There was nothing wrong with my computer or DeskJet + printer! I will always be grateful. My thanks to Henry for publishing H-SCOOP. My thanks to Don Deck for taking the time to share his knowledge with H-SCOOP readers. I supplied the bulletin board phone number which Don knew about and Henry published to certain regional Zenith technical consultants and they were most grateful, as they didn't know of this phone number themselves - they should subscribe to H-SCOOP!

I have since learned that Word Perfect can be started up in a computer using a "switch" that will temporarily bypass this bug in Zenith's original 3.3+ (WP loads Word Perfect - WP/ne loads Word Perfect but doesn't use any available expanded memory), but the ultimate solution is to simply replace EMM.SYS in your version of 3.3+, if you are running that version of MSDOS.

Now, I could sell my DeskJet + in good faith and proceed with my purchase of a LaserJet! See Classifieds about this consignment.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads can be placed in this section free of charge by any H-SCOOP subscriber. Non-subscriber's ads are placed at \$10 per insertion in advance. Ads to appear more than once must be submitted separately each month publication is desired - maximum 2 months with 2 month wait. When placing ads, try to keep in mind the 'devaluation' of computers and components and adjust your price accordingly.

FOR SALE-Z100 Low profile, 192K, older motherboard, 2-360K drives, DOS 3.1, BASIC, \$250. 4Mhz Z89 computer with Magnolia double density controller with internal single sided 5" drive, Magnolia 128K RAM drive, dual full-height 8" DS DD drives, Ultra ROM. With full documentation and much Zenith software with manuals, \$300. Tim Zmudzinski/ POB 73/ South Bend, IN 46624-0073/ (219) 288-2003.

FOR SALE-HP Deskjet + with accessories as described in Doc Campbell's article. \$650 plus shipping. Contact Henry Fale at Quikdata.

FOR SALE-Managed to get one more dealer demo TurbosPort 386 computer with 2MB RAM, 40MB hard disk, 1200 baud internal modem and DOS 3.3. This is a demo unit in perfect condition with the full one year warranty. \$2845. Quikdata, Inc/ 2619 Penn Cir/ Sheboygan, WI 53081/ (414) 452-4172.

HELP WITH PEACHTREE SERIES 8 ACCOUNTING-I need to be in touch with someone who can help re-configure Peachtree Series 8 Accounting Programs: GL, AR, AP. They are presently configured for the Z100, but I want to run them on my 386. Any help will be appreciated. Ivan A. Cooper/ 1319 Lancaster Ave/ Reading, PA 19607/ (215) 777-1886.

FOR SALE-Multi Tech MultiModem 224E 2400 baud commercial grade external modem with MNP 5 error correction. Retail \$685, one demo unit for \$275. Contact Air Capital Computer/ One Lewis Ln/ Mercer Island, WA 98040/ (206) 232-1717.

QUIKDATA BITS

Miracles of miracles. Those of you with H-SCOOP for many years remember our index we published of H-SCOOP's content year by year. 1986 was the last year this was done, simply because of lack of time. Well, I got Dan Jerome to do it for me. We should have all three missing years, 1987, 1988 and 1989 available in early March. If you want two years, a 25 cent SASE should do the trick. All three years will be covered by a 45 cent SASE (1st class mail rates). Simply send us your request along with your SASE and we'll rush them right out. Hopefully, the 1990 index will be in the December 1990 issue.

We have added to our product line the Miniscribe 3108 150MB 18ms ESDI drive, which is the same one Zenith is using in their 150 model computers. It is a half-height 5" drive with autopark. **MIN3108** - \$995

We have both the 5" and 3.5" versions of Optune hard disk software as described in our Product Brief section for \$89 (\$75 if you mention special price shown in H-SCOOP during March only).

OPTUNE-5 - 5" version \$89
OPTUNE-3 - 3.5" version \$89

I will attempt to put a list together of Zenith stock I have left in an attempt to liquidate some of my remaining Zenith inventory and publish this list next month. I will also begin working on a new catalog to come out targeted in April or May. I'll also try to set time aside to get the FILES section of our BB straightened out.

QBBS

This column which will be printed from time to time will contain messages from our Quikdata Bulletin Board System, a TBBS system, which were left from readers and customers. When some important information is on the board and perhaps relevant answers appear, we will print them in this section.

From: DAVID NORDQUIST
To: HENRY FALE (Rcvd)

Subj: WORDSTAR

I believe it was in your January newsletter that you asked for some phone numbers for WORDSTAR. First, Micropo is no more. Their new name is WORDSTAR INTERNATIONAL, named after their flagship product. The phone numbers you need are as follows: Wordstar 5.5 warranty: 1-800-245-9455
Wordstar 5.0 warranty: 1-800-828-2858
Wordstar 4.0 warranty: 1-415-499-8864
Wordstar 200 Rel 3 warranty: 1-800-826-6216
All products, post-warranty: 1-415-499-8405
All products, Customer Sales: 1-800-227-5609

From: ALLIE LINGO

To: SYSOP (Rcvd)

Subj: HD DIRECTORY UTILITY

Henry, In reference to a directory program (I sent you an extra copy of Directory Magic - DIRMAGIC from PC/Computing), I noticed that on page 156 of the March 1990 issue of PC/Computing magazine under the column heading of UTILITIES that DIRMAGIC was listed. It was stated that if you did not have a copy to ask a friend or check with a user group or bulletin board. The list price was FREE, requires 128K RAM. Evidently PC/Computing does not charge for this and that it can be put on personal bulletin boards. Thought you may want to know. Allie Lingo/POB 118/Dierks, AR 71833-0118

[OK, I'll put it on my BB for those who want it]

H-SCOOP the double density independent Heath/Zenith related newsletter is edited, published, distributed monthly, and copyright by Henry Fale and Quikdata Inc. All Rights Reserved.

APRIL issue deadline--March 15th

QUIKDATA is the parent company of H-SCOOP.

H-SCOOP/QUIKDATA

2618 Penn Clr,
Sheboygan, WI 53081-4250
(414) 452-4172
(414) 452-4344 Fax line

(414) 452-4345 Bulletin Board: 300/1200/2400/9600 (Hayes) auto-baud recognition. Character width of 10 which includes start bit, 8 data bits (7 for ASCII character + 1 parity), and one stop bit. The parity can be omitted and then transmission of graphics and binary data is possible. 8 data bits allows secure error-checking data transfer methods such as XMODEM and YMODEM to be used.

Subscription Rates--\$24/Year (\$28 Canada, \$36 overseas Airmail)--current issues. Back issues no longer available: 1-48, 52. Back issue sets available starting with issue #55 (October '84). Back issues prior to Jan '87 available at \$1 each, 1987 back issues \$2 each. No PO's and No Invoicing!!

SPECIAL BACK ISSUE DEAL Purchase the current year at the regular price of \$24 for the 12 issue year starting Jan '90 (issue #118 - subscription will expire with Dec '90) and receive all available back issues for an additional \$20 (USA prices).

Material from H-SCOOP may be reprinted in part **only** if full credit and subscription information is given with the reprint.

PHONE HOURS: M-Thu 9AM to 4:30PM. Friday 9AM to 3PM.